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This study was designed to determine the influence of day-care attendance and housing condition on the frequency of otitis media in childhood. Six hundred and eighty-one children, aged 3 to 4 years, were studied by taking somatic and social history, otological examination and tympanometry. The investigators found that earlier otitis media was 25% higher among children cared for outside home than among those cared for at home. Among the children attending day-care, there was also a statistically significant higher number of flat tympanometric curves and adenoidectomies. There were also statistically significant more children living in flats who had otitis media than there were children from houses. The children living in flats had a significantly higher number of adeniodectomies, but there was no difference between the children living in flats or homes in the number of flat tympanometric curves. The analysis showed that there were no effects of parental smoking or social status on the frequency of otitis media, adenotomy or tympanometric findings.